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Woman Champions Revitalizing Charming Southeast Homes



Mrs. Donald J. Detwiler, 631 G street S.E., with her children. Mrs. Detwiler is active in a movement to revitalize and renovate the charming old houses of Christ Church Parish, of which her home is one. She believes this plan should include all of Southeast Washington.

By Jessie Fant Evans

Mrs. Donald J. Detwiler of 631 G street S.E. is a comparatively new arrival in her neighborhood. She has been quick, however, to realize the historic values there and has become a champion in a formalized, growing movement to restore and rejuvenate Southeast Washington as a community project.

Truth is, the Federal Government's early planners envisioned this as one of the Capital's most attractive areas; yet she just happened to "stumble" upon her charming residence at 631 G accidentally. This came about when she was making provision for the return of her husband from overseas after the war, in which he was a Navy officer.

"We aren't trying to ape Georgetown," she told me. "Rather, we are trying to bring this section back to its rightful place in the scheme of the National Capital. Our backyards are among the longest in the city. Many still have carriage houses in the rear which might be suitable for studios. The back yards, in themselves, can be beautiful without sacrificing privacy and the community as a whole benefit by simple landscaping of this spaciousness."

Where unsightly, ramshackle frame buildings prevail, Mrs. Detwiler thinks there is opportunity for modern building units for families of men connected with the Navy Yard and the Marine Corps detail in the vicinity. These modern units could capitalize upon the fine old trees.

Other Delightful Locations.

At Eighth and G stands the commandant's house, set aside for the general in command of the Marine Corps and one of the oldest residences in Washington. At 636 G is a house associated with the early life of John Philip Sousa, the "March King." At 700 Sixth is a fine old square house with mansard roof, reputed to have been used as a hospital during the Civil War and which was in the possession of Harry Knott's mother and her family for years.

At 630 G is an apartment that formerly was a spacious residential home with a fountain in the rear garden. This building has an arched doorway and corniced windows and distinguished guests used to enjoy the great double drawing rooms with twin marble mantels.

The Detwiler home, as well as these others, are in historic Christ Church (Episcopal) parish, founded in 1794 to include the City of Georgetown and Washington even before the Government was moved here. The Detwiler home is diagonally across the street from Christ Church itself with its spacious grounds, parish hall and rectory, a religious center with great opportunities in the neighborhood. Christ Church was often designated Christ Church, the Navy Yard, to distinguish it from Christ Church, Georgetown. Its first services were held in a remodeled tobacco barn on New Jersey avenue near D street S.E. It was to this old building that

old doorway won her heart even before she glimpsed its wisteria-entwined, three-tiered side porches, all reminiscent of the smaller Charlestown townhouses in her native South Carolina. Its spacious, high-ceilinged rooms with the fine detail work in the cornices of many of them, convinced her that her search was ended. None of the alterations made to the house have changed its fine lines and architectural dignity. Fundamentally sound, the renovations have included installation of a modern heating plant, sink, electric range, refrigerator and automatic washer.

"Fortunately, we are a family that delights in doing things together," Mrs. Detwiler said of her husband and children. Mary Lucretia and Donald, Jr. Mr. Detwiler is now a radio engineer with the Civil Aeronautics Administration.

"The only thing of interest about our experiment with 631 G is that it shows what can be done in utilizing these interesting and worthwhile houses that dot the neighborhood and other parts of Southeast Washington."

Chairman of the committee Mrs. Detwiler is a member of the

No. 16580 Equity
In the Circuit Court for Frederick County, Maryland
Trustees Sale of Valuable 158-Acre Farm in Frederick County, Md.

By virtue of a Decree in the above entitled case, the undersigned as Trustees will sell at public auction at the Court House Door in Frederick City and County, Maryland, on Thursday, June 16, 1949, at 10:00 A.M. (DST) all the right, title and interest of the parties in and to a valuable farm situate in Middletown Election District, Frederick County, Maryland, containing 158 1/2 acres of land, more or less.

The property is improved by a large brick house with furnace heat and by a bank barn, wagon shed, hog pens and other farm outbuildings. The right is reserved by the present occupants to harvest the wheat crop thereon and a deposit of \$2,000 will be required on the day of sale. Taxes and other charges will be prorated to the day of sale and all costs of conveyance will be paid by the purchaser or purchasers.

For Further Information Telephone the Undersigned, Frederick 2048 or 652.

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THE SUNDAY STAR, Washington, D. C. A-17
JUNE 12, 1949

board of directors of Friendship House and chairman of its Arts Committee, and is also a member of the board of the Episcopal Home for Children. A ceramics expert, she has her own kiln and potter's wheel in a workshop adjoining her kitchen. Here she creates ceramic articles for the Cathedral Shop and Herb Garden. Her Na-

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